

“Optimism”

By Meg Strauss



I sit across the table from my grandfather, my legs folded closely against my chest, my head resting on my knees, my slow, unimportant thoughts making it hard to stay awake. My eyes feel heavy and they soon start to close. Suddenly, I am awoken by a loud sigh coming from across the table.

I sluggishly lift my eyelids. I stare at my grandpa for a while. He holds a newspaper in his hand. I analyze his plaid shirt, his mouth seemingly forming a straight line, his overly sized reading glasses strategically placed on the bridge of his nose. I notice him quickly glance up at me, wondering if I am going to acknowledge his obvious discomfort.

He sighs again, a little bit louder this time. I smile a little at this gesture. “What’s wrong, Gramps?” I say. He folds down the paper, crosses his legs, and leans further back in his chair. “I have no hope in what this country is becoming. Such a shame.”

He groans and then pauses, waiting for me to say something back. But instead, I just wait, for I have had this conversation many times before, and I know that he will continue without any input from me. As expected, my grandpa goes into a long rant consisting of his lack of confidence with the nation and his dark predications on the future. And like always, I sit there patiently waiting for his lecture to be over.

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“Red, White and Blue”

By Jacob Vasa



I'm optimistic about our nation's future because America is my home. I was born in Colorado and I've lived here my whole life. I was brought up to shoot guns, eat meat and farm.

I was given the opportunity from a young age to learn at a school that the government funds. I was taught that the way you decide something is through a vote and the majority of that vote wins. I was taught that red, white and blue were the best colors because they stood for our country, the best country in the world.

I still believe that to this day. Even after I've learned that to get into the presidential office you need the most Electoral College votes and the majority of votes could actually go to the loser.

That sometimes to be healthy you need to eat something other than meat. That farming can often make families go broke. And that sometimes the shooting of guns can be a horrible tragedy and make you wish that guns had never been invented.

Yes, even after knowing all of this and more, I still believe America is the best country. Why? Because the truth is, I am optimistic about my future, and my future is directly tied to the future of this country. I am an American through and through and this country may be down but it sure isn't out.

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By Zach Roll



The melting pot, the American dream, the American way. Why are these relevant, and what do they mean? Why are those phrases so popular and why do they all pertain to America and not another nation?

Well, you see, it's because for many, many generations, men and women have worked and sacrificed many things behind the scenes of our nation so that our citizens can live in the best country in the world—the safest, most secure, not to mention our abundance of freedom. What is there not to be optimistic about?

When people of the armed forces lay down their lives for the nation they so love, it is the people's duty to be grateful for that service and to uphold proudly the standards of this hallowed nation. It would be ridiculous to not be grateful for their sacrifice. That's why so many people work together to help make this country the best in the world and to keep making it better.

When hard times present themselves, the American way is to be headstrong, to address the issue and not to run. The American way is diligent in working through hard times to get to that light at the end of the tunnel, to work relentlessly until the solution is found. This nation has proven time and time and time again that it is more than capable of adapting and adjusting to hard times. Every time there is conflict, America has reigned victorious over tribulation.

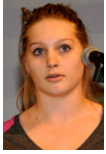
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“A Thriving Nation Requires Hope and Optimism”

Voice of Democracy winners express optimism for the future

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

By Deborah Kurtzer



I've seen a serious lack of optimism, faith and hope for an extended period in America, a country that has long been considered the greatest nation in the world, but now seems to be slipping.

Optimism is hard to find these days as terrorist attacks seem to become more frequent. It is typical to see "real life" destruction on the T.V., over the radio and on the internet. Not only are we waging a war on terror, but we are also waging war within our own country, amongst ourselves. So where is the optimism to be found?

Soldiers risk their lives every day wondering if they'll ever make it home and at the same time knowing that someone that has fought beside them from day one, won't. So how do they go on having known atrocious experiences or having witnessed gruesome events?

They do what they can with what they've got, surviving on the hopes, dreams and promises they've inherited, as well as ones they've discovered themselves. They might not always be optimistic, but they always carry hope in their back pockets. They have faith that they're doing something that is worth the risks and chances they're taking. They have faith that they play a part in keeping loved ones and fellow Americans safe and free.

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